Vol. III. Numb. 16.

THE OBSERVATOR.

Of a Whale caught in Mounts-Bay; *How Ominous; and what is likely to Enſue thereupon. Of the* French *Fleets being at Sea. Remarks on that Head.*

From **Saturday** May the 13th, to **Wednesday** May the 17th, 1704.

Obſ. WELL, now-Honeſt *Country-man*, for ſome of your New News. What Novelties have you pick-ed up?

Country-m. Not much; the *Poſt-Man* is turn'd *Whale-Catcher.*

Obſ. Our News-Writers han't caught a Whale a long Time; Prithee how big was he?

Country-m. But a little Sucking Whale of 22 Foot long. The Cow Whale made her Eſcape, but the Young one was caught in the Fiſhermens Nets. I fancy they have Swinging Nets to catch ſuch Great Fiſhes.

Obſ. All things are poſſible. But what have they done with this Whale?

Country-m. That I can't tell, but the People ſay there will be Money enough got by him. Some Projectors are going down to *Mounts-Bay* to Buy him, and they'll bring him up by Hand with Whales-Milk, as we do our Calves and Lambs in the Country; and they'll get a Licenſe from the Maſter of the Rebels, and to ſhow him about the Country till *Bartholomew-Fair*, and then they'll bring him to *London* for you and I to ſee him.

Obſ. I am not much in Love with ſtrange Sights. But, Honeſt *Country-man*, when ever Whales or other Monſtrous Fiſhes have been taken in *England*, the People have thought 'em Ominous, and Portentous, as Fore-runners of Changes in Government, the Death of Princes or Great Men, Peſtilential Seaſons, Dearth or Famine, *&c.*

Country-m. I am no Star-Monger, and never ſpoke one Word to a Planet in all my Life, and yet I'll lay you a Wager of a Quart of *October-Beer*, with a *Toaſt*, *Sugar* and *Nutmeg*, that I gueſs what theſe Whales do foretel.

Obſ. I'll take your Wager: Let's hear your Divination.

Country-m. If the Fiſhermen had caught the great Whale, then it would have foretold the Deſtruction of *Lewis* the Tyrant of *France*, who rolls on the Surface of the Earth, as great a *Leviathan* as that which rolls on the Surface of the Water: For Tyrants diſturb the Peace and Tranquillity of Mankind in like manner, as thoſe Sea Monſters diſturb the Peace of the harmleſs Inhabitants of the Ocean; and therefore I do think that Tyrannical Princes are Signify'd and Declar'd to the World by the appearance of theſe Ugly Monſters.

Obſ. Oh rare *Country man!* Thou'lt be a South-Sayer in Time; go on.

Country-m. Now the little Whale being taken, foretells the Deſtruction of the *Spaniſh Perkin*, the D. D' *Anjou*; you'll find that poor Fellow caught in a Net in a little Time. He's under the Government of *Piſces*, and muſt be cut into Blubber and Boil'd into Oyl.

Obſ. I wiſh you ben't out in your Scheme. But, Prithee, what will that Oyl be good for?

Country-m. It is Excellent good to ſupple the Hams of the *Jacobites* and *Non-jurors*, that they may Bow low to the Graven Images of *Arbitrary Power* and *Tyranny*. It will cauſe an Agility in their Joints, that they may run away as faſt from *Perkin*, as they did from his Pretended Father. It's a Soveraign Oyl to keep in order the Wards of the ſet of Locks and the Maſter Key that unlocks all the Offices in a certain Country; 'tis good for the Devil knows what.

Obſ. You'll give me leave to gueſs too, won't you?

Country-m. By all means; it may be you hold ſome Correſpondence with the Stars, you have got ſuch a long thing in your Study, as the Star-Gazer upon St. *Magnus*'s Dial holds in his Hands.

Obſ. A *Telleſcope* you mean. But that Fellow on St. *Magnus* Dial is not looking at the Stars, he's only ſeeing whether he can find Alderman *Blackwel* above the Clouds.

Country-m. Bankers ſeldom mount upwards, but he being lighten'd of his Money perhaps might Aſcend. But Hang me if I did not think that long thing had been a Speaking Trumpet, thro' which the Almanack-makers talk'd to the Stars. But, pray Sir, go on with your Divination.

Obſ. If you remember, the Count De *Tholouſe* was ſaid at that Time to be off the *Lizard*, with the *French* Fleet; what think you but that he ſent in thoſe two Whales as Spies, to give him an Account of what Ships we had in *Plimouth* Harbour.

Country-m. Nay, then we are in a fine Condition, if *Lewis* Works under Water as well as under Ground; he's a Mole, he's a Fiſh, he's a Devil: The Devil take him for me; I am ſure I was ſadly frighted when I heard Count *Louſe* was upon our Coaſt, I fancy'd I felt the Vermin crawl on my Back. But, Pray, what do you think of this Story, is the *French* Fleet out or no?

Obſ. The *Gazzette* ſays they are not out; and we muſt believe the *State Paper*.

Country-m. I am glad of it indeed.

Obſ. Why are you glad of it? You us'd to love Fighting-Stories.

Country-m. Ay, I love to hear Stories of our having Beat the *French*, but I can't abide to have it ſaid the *French* have Beat the *Engliſh*, as the Folk at *London* ſaid they would have done if they had Engaged.

Obſ. Thoſe Folk ow'd Queen *Ann* and Her Realm no great Kindneſs: But did they give any Reaſons for what they affirm'd?

Country-m. Yes, they ſaid the *French* were more in Number than we; that our Ships were not well Man'd; and I am ſure, if they are Victual'd as they were laſt Year, they would have but little Stomach to Fight.

Obſ. Engliſhmen in former Ages did not count Noſes when they went to Fight; they never thought the Enemy too many, or that they had Kill'd enough of 'em. And what ever thoſe People may think, I could heartily wiſh that our Fleet were fairly come up with the *French*: The Fleet is under the Command of an Admiral that knows how to Fight, that has both Courage and Honeſty,

Honesty, and the other Commanders under Sir *Cloudsley* are such, on whose Honesty and Courage the Nation may depend. I wish, with all my Heart, the *French* may be out, and that they may Fight the *English* Squadron.

Country-m. But how can they Fight without Men? Those Folk said the Ships were not half Man'd.

Obs. I tell thee those Folk are Impudent Lyars. The Navy is not so ill-Man'd as that comes too; and I'll venture our *English* Navy with their middle Complement of Men against the *French* in their full Complement. Nor is there any Necessity of Fighting under a middle Complement of Men; there were, at the Time we had Notice of the *French* Fleet, between 70 and 80 Sail of Merchant-Men Bound to the *West-Indies*, which, by their Convoys, were brought back to *Plymouth*; these Ships had nothing more to do than to bring to an Anchor in *Catwater*, and put all their Men on Board the Queens Ships, save just enough to look after their Ships at Anchor.

Country-m. This is something out of my Element, yet it seems Reasonable. But, Master, I believe the Merchants Sailors won't care to go after that manner; they don't love the Hogoe. If the Beef and Pork had Stunk as bad this Year as it did the last, then our Sailors might use it, as I have Read the *Buccaniers* in *America* do their *Stink-Pots*, they might fling *Mess-pieces* at the *Frenchmen*, and kill the Dogs with Poison Pellets.

Obs. Truly, Honest *Country-man*, there is no great Likelyhood of the Sailors being well Provided for this Year, tho' there are Seven Commissioners appointed for that Business, when Three Wise Men that understand it may perform the whole with a great deal of ease, and save the Nation Yearly 100000 Pound into the Bargain: You may guess what the Provisions will be, especially Pork, that's Kill'd in the Month of *May*, and what sort of Salt they will have for the next Season, when 'tis bought in this Month. I could say more, but talking of these things out of Parliament is talking out of Time, you would wonder what fresh Accounts I already have of Abuses in that Affair, notwithstanding the late Representation of the House of Lords to Her Majesty.

Country-m. The whole Town talks of that. But, Master, keep to your Text; let us follow the *French* Squadron.

Obs. Not I; I follow them, no, no, I an't to be trusted with one of the Queens Pinaces; I am a Sea Heretick, and can't believe in the mighty Wisdom of some of the Managers of our Navy.

Country-m. No, no, you are to go for a Foot Soldier; did not I tell you so the last time we met? But I don't mean to follow the *French* Fleet to Fight 'em, but to follow 'em in Talk as the People do in the Coffee-Houses at *London*.

Obs. If the *French* Fleet is not already come out of *Brest*, it certainly will Sail from thence in a short time; if they are out I don't think they are gone for *Ireland* with Forces, as was mentioned the last time we met; I rather believe they are gone to the *Northward*, to joyn the Squadron from *Dunkirk*, by which time they expect Sir *Cloudsley Shovel*, and the *West-India* Convoy will be Sail'd, and then they may play what Freaks they please in the Channel.

Country-m. Why, if those Ships are gone, I hope we shall have some left in the Channel. We han't, I hope, sent 'em all to look after a Crown for the Emperours Son.

Obs. I can't inform you of the Summer Guard; I know not in what Condition our Ships are at Home, nor how they Retrieve the Honour of the *English*-Nation Abroad. But of this I am sure, that we ought to have a sufficient Guard at Sea this Summer. I told you above Six Months ago that the *French* would put to Sea this Season.

Country-m. You have told us abundance of True Stories, but you had as good a held your Tongue; I believe some Persons have a spight against you, they'l do nothing that you would have done; and therefore, for the future, if you are minded to do your Country any Service, speak quite contrary to your own Sentiments, and the good of your Country. Commend *Runaway Captains*, as fittest to make *Admirals*, tell 'em that the Sailors ought to be Discouraged. That Stinking Beef and Pork is the most Nourishing and most Agreeable to the Stomachs of Sailors. Tell 'em that 'tis more for the *Honour* and *Glory* of the *English* Nation, that the Hospital at *Greenwich* be turn'd into a *Play-House*, nay, rather into a *Mass-House*, than that it should be Finished for the Use of Sailors; cry down the Occonomy of the Navy in times past, the Valour and Courage of our Ancient Sea Commanders, and write an Elegy on the much Lamented Death of *Wade* and *Kirby*; perhaps they may cross you in these things, and so do the Nation some good tho' out of spite.

Obs. I don't trouble my head about 'em, when I can speak with expectation of having those Evils Redress'd, I'll assure you I shan't be Silent. Prithee make the best enquiry thou can'st about the Count de *Tholouse*'s Squadron; if they should happen to meet with our Homeward bound Straits Fleet, 'twould be a great stroke to the City of *London*, which is the *Heart*, the *Blood*, and *Vitals* of this Kingdom.

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